

Signing up for race can help motivate you

Shannon Simmons

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Question: I usually go outside and walk or jog at least three to four times a week. I am finding that it is getting harder and harder for me to be consistent with the cold and wet weather. How can I stay motivated to get outside and get in those miles?

Answer: The winter months can squelch your motivation with the dreary and cold mornings. For those who normally head outside for their normal exercise, the rain, cold and sometimes ice can sideline you from getting out there. But most of the time, lack of motivation and a reason to keep up the work is what sidetracks us from our usual routine.

The first thing I would do is sign up for a few different short-distant races throughout the winter months. There are so many fun races you can participate in, and they will keep you motivated to train by either walking or running.

Most of the races around the holiday months are themed and make for a fun time to exercise with other people. Willamette Valley Road Runners has a great website, hosted by Gallagher's Fitness Resources, at www.wvroadrunners.org/events.php. The website lists virtually every race in varying distances that are happening in or near the Northwest. For example, there is a Civil War Relay in Eugene on Sunday, a Jingle Bells Run in Eugene (5K, 8K, kids) on Dec. 11, a First Run and Walk on New Year's Eve in downtown Portland (3K, 5K) and the milelong Capitol Mile Race around Salem's capitol on Jan. 1st.

Many smaller races have low entry fees and offer a group discount rate. Get a group of friends together whom you can train with and race. You also can join a running group at Gallagher's Fitness Resources if you do not know other people who are looking for running partners.

After signing up for a race, I suggest getting the proper cold-weather gear to keep you going. I suggest buying a good waterproof windbreaker jacket that you can wear on top of your layers. This will keep you dry. Underneath the windbreaker, you should have a moisture-wicking long-sleeve running shirt with at least one shirt on top of that, depending on the weather.

Next, get yourself comfortable, moisture-wicking gloves to keep your fingers dry and warm. A good hat that will cover your ears will help you feel warmer on colder days. Your lower body also should be warm and covered by moisture-wicking pants. I personally like lululemon's running pants (www.lululemon.com) for staying warm and dry.

The last suggestion I have is that you find an indoor alternative. A high-quality and warranted treadmill is always a great option for people who are trying to fit in a quick workout that also is

convenient. If you do not have the money or desire to have a treadmill at home, you could join a gym that has exercise classes or other exercise equipment you could use in the summer. When the New Year comes around, many gyms will offer special joining deals.

Do not let the winter months derail your personal fitness goals. Instead, continue training and focus your sights on various races or running group gatherings to keep you motivated.

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